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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the ways in which native and non-native speakers of Kiswahili close conversations. Native speaker data were obtained from observation and field notes, recorded face-to-face interactions, recorded telephone conversations, reconstructed dialogues, and televised plays. Non-native speaker (American) data were drawn from role-play situations, office conversations, and telephone conversations. Analysis of native speaker data showed that Kiswahili closings were elaborate and could extend to over five turns taken. An exchange of goodbyes did not usually signal the end of a conversation, there was no strict ordering of features, and some closing features were linked to the opening of the conversation. Analysis of non-native speaker closings showed that learners performed minimal closings, were often unwilling to reopen a conversation once "goodbyes" had been produced, and rarely used features linking closing to opening. In a comparison with findings on conversational openings, explored in a previous study, it was found that non-native speakers were more proficient at closing than opening a Kiswahili conversation. (MSE)

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Closing Kiswahili Conversations: The Performance of Native and Non-native Speakers

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This paper reports on how speakers of Kiswahili, native and non-native, close conversations. In this paper I show that 1) closings in Kiswahili are quite elaborate and may extend to over five turns at talking, 2) an exchange of 'goodbyes' does not usually signal the end of a conversation, 3) there is no strict ordering of features and 4) some closing features are linked to the opening part of the conversation.

Analysis of non-native speaker closings, in this case American learners of Kiswahili, shows that 1) learners perform minimal closings, 2) they are often 'unwilling' to reopen a closing once 'goodbyes' have been produced and 3) they rarely use features that link closings to openings. Learners' performance on 'closing' the conversation is compared to their performance on 'opening' it (Omar 1991; 1992). The results show that learners are more 'successful' at closing a conversation in Kiswahili than at opening one. The question why this is so will be addressed in the paper.

INTRODUCTION

The analysis of Kiswahili Conversational Closings is based on the work done by Button (1987), Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992), Kasper (1989), Knapp, Hart, Friedrich and Schulman (1973), and Schegloff and Sacks (1973) on English closings. These analyses can be partially applied to Kiswahili Conversational Closings (CCs): some of the features found in English CCs, such as the continuation feature 'see you later', the appreciation feature 'thanks', and features like 'OK' or the equivalent are also found in Kiswahili CCs. In Kiswahili,

however, these features do not have a strict order of occurrence as they do in an English CC. In Kiswahili, they can pre-close the conversation, i.e., signal the beginning of a closing, as well as terminate a conversation.

THE PERFORMANCE OF NATIVE SPEAKERS

Data Collection

Native speaker data were obtained from five different sources: 1) participant observation and field notes, 2) recording of face to face interactions wherever possible, 3) recording telephone conversations, 4) reconstructing dialogues from personal experience, and 5) analyzing video plays from Zanzibar Television. Participant observation and the taking of field notes were done by the researcher for a period of one month in Zanzibar.[1] I observed and taped people interacting at home, in the streets, and in offices. When it was not possible to get recorded data, I reconstructed the dialogues shortly after the conversations. Native speakers, male and female, of a variety of ages, participated in this study. Telephone conversations were recorded by S, a native speaker of Kiswahili from Zanzibar. He recorded incoming and outgoing telephone conversations to and from his residence. All examples used in this paper indicate the source of data. The conversational exchanges I have analyzed here are between acquainted participants.

Initiating and Terminating Kiswahili Closings

Kiswahili Conversational Closings (CCs) are initiated by the use of the equivalent of 'OK', *haya*.[2] But it is also possible to find *haya* in combination with features of **Continuation** (statements expressing desire to see the other again in the future), **Phatic Inquiries (PIs)** (routine expressions inquiring about the well being of the other), **Declaration to leave** (statements expressing intention to leave), and **Appreciation** (expressions of thanks). Examples (1) to (5) are examples of closings initiated by this combination. The closings in Examples (1) to (5) were terminated without the actual exchange of 'goodbyes'.[3]

1) 40 year old man, D, talking to an older woman L (taped telephone conversation).

D:	Haya basi, *inshallah*	OK then, if God
	nikipata fursa	wishes if I get time,
	nitakuja huko.	I'll pass by there.
L:	Inshallah baba.	If God wishes, baba.[4]
D:	Haya asante.	OK, thanks.
L:	Haya.	OK.
	[end of conversation]	

2) W and Q are women friends (taped street encounter).

W:	Haya *tutaonana.*	OK, we will meet.
Q:	Tutaonana.	We will meet.
W:	Inshallah.	If God wishes.
	[end of conversation]	

The CCs in Examples (1) and (2) are initiated by the use of continuation features. These continuation features are specific in (1) and general in (2).

Another feature that may initiate a CC is a PI, a feature also found in a Kiswahili Conversational Openings (CO). One example of the use of a PI in pre-closing a conversation is seen in Example (3).

3) M is talking to Z (taped telephone conversation).

M:	Haya *bibi na watoto*	OK, are the wife and the
	hawajambo?	kids fine?
Z:	*Hawajambo*, alhamdulillah.	They are fine, thank God.
M:	Haya.	OK.
Z:	Haya asante.	OK thanks.
	[end of conversation]	

The pre-closing in Example (4) is an explicit declaration of leaving, produced by K after talking to T in a street interaction. K wanted to go on his way after stopping to talk to a friend. This kind of pre-closing is also used in intended interactions.

4) K accompanied by another person talking to a friend T (taped street encounter).

K:	Haya *bwana* tunakwenda.[5]	OK bwana, we are going.
T:	Haya. Karibuni.	OK. Welcome.
	[end of the conversation]	

The pre-closing in Example (5) uses the appreciation feature *asante*. The use of this feature to initiate a closing does not seem to have the same function as when used at other places in the conversation. Here, it does not necessarily mean 'thanks for calling' or 'thanks for a certain service rendered' as would have been the case in English.

5) N talking to his friend U (taped telephone conversation).

U:	OK.	
N:	OK. *Asante*.	OK. Thanks.
U:	Haya.	OK.
N:	Haya.	OK.
	[end of conversation]	

Some cues which are used for pre-closing may also be used to terminate a conversation. That is to say, features of continuation, appreciation, and 'OK' are found in both the pre-closing and terminating sequence turns of a Kiswahili CC. There are other additional cues found in terminating a conversation. One of these cues is that of **Welcome** (statements expressing desire for the other to visit again). The welcome feature is seen in Example 4 above.[6] Other terminating features are **Regards** (sending greetings to others) and **Leave-taking** (the equivalent of 'good-bye') as shown in Examples (6) and (7) respectively.

6) X, a 30 years old man talking to an older woman, Y (taped street encounter).

X:	Haya	OK.
Y:	Haya *nisalimie*.	OK my regards.
X:	Haya asante.	OK thanks.
	[end of conversation]	

7) Boss (S) talking to his employee (E); male participants (taped telephone conversation).

S:	Sawa?	OK?
E:	Sawa.	OK.
S:	Haya.	OK.
E:	Haya.	Ok.
S:	*Kwaheri.*	Goodbye.
E:	Haya.	OK.
	[end of conversation]	

A participant can also say 'goodbye' to others who are not present at the time of closing the conversation but who were there at the opening part as seen in Example (8).

8) A has been visiting B and C; C is not present at the closing part of the conversation; male participants (Zanzibar Television play).

A:	Haya bwana.	OK bwana.
B:	Karibu bwana A.	Welcome bwana A.
A:	*Niagie.*	Say 'goodbye' for me.
B:	Haya tutaonana.	OK, we will meet.
	[end of conversation]	

Table 1 shows the closing cues found at the initiating stage and at the terminating stage.

Table 1. Features that occur in pre-closing and terminating turns of a Kiswahili Conversational Closing.

Cue	initial stage	terminal stage
1. continuation	+	
a. general *tutaonana* 'see you later'		+
b. specific *nitakuja mara nyingine* 'I'll come another time'	+	—
2. The use of *haya* 'OK'	+	+
3. Appreciation *asante* 'thanks'	+	+
4. PIs and PRs *habari zaidi?/nzuri* 'More news?/good	+	—
5. Intention to leave *nakwenda* 'I'm going'	+	—
6. Welcome *karibu* 'welcome'	—	+
7. Regards *nisalimie* 'my regards'	—	+
8. Leave taking *kwaheri* 'goodbye'	—	+

+ = occurrence; — = no occurrence

The Link Between Closings and Openings

Conversational Closings in Kiswahili must be understood in relation to Conversational Openings (COs). There are features that occur in COs as well as CCs in Kiswahili. The presence of these features in both COs and CCs provides an important symmetry between these two aspects of discourse. The common features found in both COs and CCs are Phatic Inquiries (PIs) and Phatic Responses (PRs), the welcome feature karibu, the PR salama, and the regard feature nisalimie.[7]

The motivation for the use of PIs in the closing is linked with the opening section of the conversation. As discussed in Omar (1992), one of the participants in a conversation does not usually get the chance to ask PIs because the production of PIs is usually dominated by the other participant--in both 'age difference' and 'same age' exchanges. Therefore, the participant who does not get the opportunity to produce PIs at the opening part of the conversation will do so at the first possible place in the conversation. This is usually the first possible pre-closing or following the first pre-closing turn and thus causes movement out of the already initiated closing. X, in Example (9), did not accept the pre-closing produced by Y and decided to produce a PI which he was not able to produce at the opening part of the conversation.

9) X, who is 30 years old, is talking to an older person, Y; male and female participants (taped telephone conversation).

	[pre-close 1]	
Y:	Haya bwana.	OK bwana.
X:	*Je salama?*	Is (everything) alright?
Y:	Alhamdulillah	Praise be to God.
	[about 10 turns at talk]	
	[pre-close 2]	
X:	Haya	OK.
Y:	Haya nisalimie.	OK my regards.
X:	Haya asante.	OK thanks.
	[end of conversation]	

X, who is younger than Y, did not have the opportunity to ask PIs during the opening part of the conversation. X had initiated the opening by using the respectful form *shikamoo* and Y had the active role of asking PIs. Y asked 5 PIs before she started the first pre-closing *haya*. X took this opportunity to take the questioning role and asked one PI. Then he initiated pre-close 2 which was accepted by Y and the conversation was terminated by *haya, asante*--a feature which was also used to initiate a closing elsewhere. The whole exchange between X and Y is reproduced in Example (10).

10) 30 year old man, X, passes a 55 year old female acquaintance Y; Different age; PI domination (taped street encounter).

X:	Shikamoo	Shikamoo
Y:	Marahaba. Habari?	OK. News?
X:	Nzuri.	Good.
Y:	Hujambo?	Are you fine?
X:	Sijambo.	I am fine.
Y:	Habari za kwenu?	News of your home?
X:	Nzuri.	Good.
Y:	Watu wote hawajambo?	Is everybody fine?
X:	Hawajambo.	They are fine.
Y:	Watoto?	The children?
X:	Hawajambo.	They are fine.
Y:	Haya bwana.	OK, bwana.
X:	*Je salama?*	Peaceful?
Y:	Alhamdulillah	Praise be to God.
	[about 10 turns at talk]	
	[pre-close 2]	
X.	Haya	OK.
Y.	Haya nisalimie.	OK my regards.
X.	Haya asante.	OK thanks.
	[end of conversation]	

Another feature that can occur at the beginning and at the end of a conversation is the welcome feature *karibu*. The reply *karibuni* or *karibu* (if it had been one person) 'welcome' in Example (4) reproduced here as Example (11) is also used in the opening part of a conversation to welcome a person inside a house, an office, or a store as in Example (12). When used at the end of the conversation, *karibu* means 'welcome again some other time'; and when used at the beginning, it means 'welcome now'.

11) K accompanied by another person talking to a friend T (face-to-face).

K:	Haya bwana tunakwenda.	OK bwana we are going.
T:	*Haya. Karibuni.*	OK. Welcome (later).
	[end of conversation]	

12) Unique opening *hodi*. (A is visiting his friend B; dialogue obtained from Television Zanzibar video play).

A:	Hodi, hodi	Knock, knock.
B:	*Karibu* bwana.	Welcome (now) bwana.
	Oho! Nini hali?	Oho! What condition?

Some non-native speakers of the language (observed in the Comoro Islands) would come back in again right away when they hear the word *karibu*.

A third feature that may occur at the beginning and end of a conversation is the PR *salama* 'peace'. At the beginning of the conversation it responds to the PI about the other participants' news--*habari?/salama*. At the end, it is used to respond to an intention to leave feature as seen in Example (13).

13) ID is leaving for school in the morning; L is his grandmother (reconstructed).

ID:	Haya nakwenda.	OK, I'm going.
L:	Haya baba. Nenda *salama*.	OK, baba. Go in peace.
	[end of conversation]	

Another feature found in both COs and CCs is *nisalimie* meaning 'greet me' in the opening part of the conversation, and 'my regards to...' or 'my greetings to...' in the closing part. *Nisalimie* is used as a regard feature in Example (14) below.

14) W and H are two women of the same age (taped street encounter).

H:	Haya asante	OK, thanks.
W:	Haya	OK.
H:	Tutaonana.	We will meet.
W:	*Haya. Nisalimie.*	OK. My regards.
H:	Haya.	OK.

Nisalimie is used as an opening feature when a child forgets to greet an older person. The child is reprimanded and is required to greet by using the respectful form as seen in Example (15).

15) Child MS has not used the respectful form to greet L, an adult (reconstructed).

L:	We mtoto hebu nisalimie.	O, child greet me.
MS:	Chei chei bibi.[8]	Chei chei madam.
L:	Chei chei.	Chei chei.

Summary

I have shown in this section that closing the conversation in Kiswahili is elaborate but not as elaborate as opening one (Omar 1991; 1992). Neither does it seem to be governed by strong cultural constraints. It does not seem to matter who initiates the closing by producing the first possible pre-closing. A participant of any age can initiate a closing and there seem to be several options to take. I have also shown that closing features do not have a strict order of occurrence and that there are features that occur in a CC as well as a CO in Kiswahili.

THE PERFORMANCE OF NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS

This part of the paper compares the performance of learners of different proficiency levels: beginning, intermediate and advanced learners. Beginning learners had one semester of Kiswahili classroom instruction at the beginning of data collection, intermediate learners had three, and advanced learners had more than six semesters of classroom instruction, as well as exposure to the target language environment.

Data Collection

The closing data were obtained from role play situations, recording of office hour conversations and telephone conversations used in Omar (1991; 1992). Specifically, I used recorded verbal role plays: low proficiency learners were given ten invented situations to role play in class, while high proficiency learners presented an impromptu play in class, also recorded. All learners participated in office hour conversations, but only advanced learners participated in telephone conversations. The description of learners' CCs will be drawn from these different tasks.

The Performance of Beginning and Intermediate Learners

Beginning and intermediate learners use the same kind of options to close a conversation. Their preference for terminating a conversation is the leave-taking option *kwaheri* 'goodbye'. Example (16) is a role play in which beginning learners, S1 and S2, meet accidentally in the street. So their conversation is made up of an opening part and a closing part only. After a few turns of exchanging PIs and PRs, S2 proposes termination of the conversation by saying *kwaheri* and S1 agrees to terminate the conversation by producing another *kwaheri*.

16) S1 meets a friend S2. They haven't seen each other since last week (role play; beginning class).

S1:	Na watoto hawajambo?	And are the children fine?
S2:	Hawajambo. Kwaheri.	They are fine.
S1:	Kwaheri.	Goodbye.
	[end of conversation]	

Intermediate learners also prefer the leave taking option. Example (17) is a role play situation between S3 and S4 who is a friend of S3's father. At the beginning of this conversation S3 acted non-native like by not producing the respectful greeting form even though she is younger than S4. In the closing part, she also acts non-native like by not verbally replying to the leave-taking feature *kwaheri* 'goodbye'. S4 says *kwaheri* while S3 terminates the conversation non-verbally by the wave of her hand.

17) Talking to father's friend (verbal role play; intermediate learners).

S3.	Hodi. Hodi.	Knock. Knock.
S4:	Karibu.	Welcome.
S3:	Hujambo?	How are you?
S4:	Sijambo. Na wewe je?	I'm fine. How about you?
S3:	Sijambo. Na Habari zako?	I'm fine. And your news?
S4:	Nzuri. Na wewe?	Good. And yours?
S3:	Nzuri. Habari za baba?	Good. News of your father?
S4:	Nzuri lakini ana kazi nyingi.	Good but he has a lot of work.
S3:	Yuko wapi?	Where is he?
S4:	Yuko kazini.	He's at the office.
S3:	Nitakupa neno umwambie baba yako kwamba nataka	I'll give you a message to tell to your father

	kumwona.	that I want to see him.
S4:	Kwanini?	Why?
S4:	Kwasababu ya kazi. Kwaheri.	Because of work. Goodbye.
S3:	[waves hand only]	
	[end of conversation]	

Leave-taking in Examples (16) and (17) is abruptly done. In native speaker closings, when the leave-taking option is used it usually occurs with at least one other closing feature. In Example (16), for example, a native speaker would have responded with *haya, kwaheri* 'OK, goodbye' or use other terminating features from the available options.

In the office with their instructors, learners typically used general continuation feature *tutaonana* 'see you later'. In Example (18), one would think the conversation was terminated when S responded non-verbally by leaving the room. The student, however, wanted to use the general continuation feature but had forgotten and did not recognize it when FT used it the first time. So the student returned to the office and asked how to say 'see you later' and used it to terminate the conversation.

18) Instructor FT's office (intermediate student).

FT:	Haya.	OK.
S:	Haya.	OK.
FT:	Kwaheri.	Goodbye.
S:	Kwaheri.	Goodbye.
FT:	Tutaonana.	We will meet.
S:	[goes away and returns immediately]	
	Alwiya, unasemaje 'see you later'	Alwiya, how do you say 'see you later?'
FT:	'Tutaonana'	'See you later.'
S:	Haya. Tutaonana.	OK. We will meet.
FT:	Tutaonana.	We will meet.
	[end of conversation]	

The above example shows that the student is ready to learn the continuation feature.

In addition to the continuation feature, another feature that is exhibited in the closings of both beginning and intermediate learners is the appreciation option.

Example (19) is a closing taken from office hour conversation between a beginning student and instructor MT. The student initiates the closing.

19) Instructor MT's office (beginning student).

S:	OK. Asante.	OK. Thanks.
MT:	Asante. Kwaheri.	Thanks. Goodbye.
S:	Kwaheri.	Goodbye.
	[end of conversation]	

An option that intermediate students rarely used and was not used at all by beginning students is the intention to leave. Out of the 40 verbal role plays from beginning and intermediate learners, intention to leave was used only twice by intermediate students. One such use is seen in Example (20).

20) A visited her friend B and is about to leave (role play; intermediate class).

S5:	Ninaondoka karibu.	I'll soon go.
S6:	Mara hii.	So soon.
S5:	Ndiyo. Asante kwa chai na keki. Kwaheri.	Yes. Thanks for the tea and the cake. Goodbye.
S5:	Kwaheri.	Goodbye.
	[end of conversation]	

One learner in the intermediate class was able to engage in a lengthy closing as seen in Example (21). She moved out of the closing by remarking on the weather. She was able to do this easily even though *kwaheri* had been exchanged. Other learners from all levels find it hard to open up a closing after *kwaheri*, even though it is done by native speakers. Out of the 27 closings obtained from the office hour conversations between the instructors and the learners (beginning and intermediate students), this is the only extended closing recorded.

21) Instructor FT's office (intermediate student).

FT:	Vizuri.	Good.
S:	Asante.	Thanks
FT:	Tutaonana, basi, kesho.	We will meet tomorrow then.
S:	Kesho.	Tomorrow.
FT:	Asante. Kwaheri.	Thanks. Goodbye.

S:	Kwaheri. Unafikiri kwamba. [pointing at the snow outside]	Goodbye. Do you think that..
FT:	Theluji nzuri.	Snow is good.
S:	Sikutegemea theluji.	I didn't expect snow.
FT:	Ndiyo.	Yes.
S:	Nitakwenda darasani ya hesabu.	I'll go to the Math class.
FT:	Haya. Kwaheri.	OK. Goodbye.
S:	Kwaheri. Asante pia.	Goodbye. Thanks also.
FT:	Tutaonana. [end of conversation]	We will meet.

In this part of the survey, learners have in most cases used successfully the closing features which are also found in English. These features are: continuation, appreciation, and leave-taking. Only two learners tried the feature 'intention to leave'. Learners used the strategy of repeating the previous turn, mentioned in Kasper (1989), and successfully close the conversation.

The Performance of Advanced Learners

In this section, I describe the performance of advanced learners who have had target language exposure. These learners are more familiar with each other and with their instructor than the lower proficiency learners were. Therefore, the advanced learners are able to use all the options available to close a conversation in Kiswahili. They are able to use these closing features in combination which is unusual for beginning and intermediate learners. Example (22) is the end of a conversation in a role play and we see five closing features used: intention to leave, welcome, regards, continuation, appreciation, and leave-taking.

22) At a friend's house (role play; advanced learners).

S1:	Asante sana. Lazima niende mjini sasa.	Thanks a lot. I must go downtown now.
S2:	Karibu tena. Nisalimie.	Welcome again. My regards.
S1:	Asante. Tutaonana.	Thanks. We will meet.
S2:	Kwaheri. [end of conversation]	Goodbye.

These features are used in elicited conversations as well as in natural conversations as seen in Example (23) in a telephone conversation between an advanced student and instructor MT.

23) L2 calls MT (advanced student; recorded telephone conversation).

L2:	Sawa. Asante sana.	Fine. Thanks a lot.
MT:	Haya.	Ok.
L2:	Na tutaonana.	And we will meet.
MT:	Haya. Kwaheri.	Ok. Goodbye.
L2:	Kwaheri.	
	[end of conversation]	

Some advanced learners take appreciation literally and respond with a non-native speaker equivalent of 'Don't mention it'. As mentioned earlier, the appreciation feature in a Kiswahili CC is not used literally. It does not mean that a native speaker participant is thanking another participant for a service rendered. Even when it is literally used to mean 'thank you for a service,' elsewhere in a conversation, native speakers will respond with another *asante*, or *haya* 'OK' as MT has done in Example (24) above. Many learners use *si kitu* 'it's nothing' using the minimizing feature used in English CCs in response to the appreciation feature. But no such reply is given in Kiswahili. L2 in Example (24) responds to *asante* by modelling her response on the English minimizing feature. But in the same closing, she uses 'Ok' in response to another *asante* produced by L5. Thus showing variable performance within the same learner.

24) End of a telephone conversation between L5 and L2.

L5:	OK. Asante sana.	Ok. Thanks a lot.
L2:	OK. Sikitu.	Ok. It's nothing.
	Asante.	Thanks.
L5:	Na tutaonana Ijumaa.	And we will meet on Friday.
L2:	Ndiyo.	Yes.
L5:	Asante sana.	Thanks a lot.
L2:	OK.	OK.
L5:	Kwaheri.	Goodbye.
L2:	Kwaheri.	Goodbye.
	[end of conversation]	

Advanced learners use the specific continuation feature as well. L4 in Example (25) begins the pre-closing by specifying that she will call FT.

25) End of a conversation between FT and L4 (office hour).

L4:	Sawa. Nitakupigia simu.	Fine. I will call you.
FT:	Sawa.	Fine.
L4:	Baada ya..	After the...
FT:	Haya.	OK.
L4:	Asante.	Thanks.
FT:	Tutaonana.	We will meet.
L4:	Kwaheri.	Goodbye.
	[end of conversation]	

In Example (26), L3 uses the regard feature. The ability to use this feature shows familiarity between participants. All the advanced learners have contact with their instructors and their families outside the classroom. Because of this shared knowledge between the advanced learners and their instructors, it is easier for the advanced learners to use the regard feature. Low proficiency learners do not have much contact with each other or with their instructors. Therefore, they could not be expected to use the regard feature.

26) End of conversation between FT and L3 (office hour).

FT:	Haya. Tutaonana.	OK. We will meet again.
L3:	Nisalimie.	My regards.
FT:	Haya. Kwaheri.	OK. Goodbye.
L3:	Mmm	
FT:	Tutaonana kesho darasani.	We will meet tomorrow in class.
L3:	Leo tuta...	Today we will...
FT:	Leo hakuna. Nimesahau kukwambia.	Today, it's canceled. I forgot to tell you.
L3:	Haya.	Fine.
FT:	Haya. Asante. Kwaheri.	OK. Thanks. Goodbye.
L3:	Kwaheri.	Goodbye.
	[end of conversation]	

In Example (26), L3 probably finds it hard to open up the closing. To him the conversation has been terminated because FT has said *kwaheri*. But there was something important that he needed to ask but he did not know how to reopen the conversation. FT noticed this and helped out by mentioning what was supposed to be mentioned earlier.

Linking Closings to Openings

Linking COs with CCs was mainly done by advanced learners. An example of the welcome feature was used in Example (22) reproduced here as Example (27), one example among many others used by advanced learners.

27) At a friend's house (role play; advanced learners).

S1:	Asante sana. Lazima niende mjini sasa.	Thanks a lot. I must go downtown now.
S2:	Karibu tena. Nisalimie.	Welcome again. My regards.
S1:	Asante. Tutaonana.	Thanks. We will meet.
S2:	Kwaheri. [end of conversation]	Goodbye.

In Example (27), S2 used the regard feature *nisalimie*. This feature is only used in the closing part of the conversation by advanced learners. In native speaker interactions *nisalimie* 'Greet me' is used when an older native speaker challenges a younger one. It is not expected of learners to challenge each other.

In all of the non-native speaker closings examined (ten recorded telephone conversations between the advanced learners) only one advanced student used a PI to pre-close a conversation. A native speaker usually uses this option if she did not have a chance to ask PIs at the beginning of the conversation or had forgotten to ask about a friend or family member of the other participant. L4 in Example (28) initiates the closing by asking about JP who is L5's friend. This is pre-closing 1. L4's motivation for using a PI to pre-close in the above example is like that of a native speaker of Kiswahili: she did not ask about JP at the beginning of the conversation.

28) L5 calls L4 (advanced learners; recorded telephone conversation).

	[phone rings]	
L4:	Hallo.	
L5:	Hallo	
L4:	Hujambo?	How are you?
L5:	Sijambo P. Habari yako?	I'm fine P. Your news?
L4:	Nzuri.	Good.
L5:	Habari za leo?	News of today?
L4:	Salama.	Peaceful.
	[about seventeen turns at talk]	
	[pre-close 1]	
L4:	Habari za JP?	News of JP?
L5:	Sawa. Ana kazi nyingi.	OK. He has a lot of work.
L4:	Nisalimie.	Give him my regards.
	[about seven turns of more talk]	
	[pre-close 2]	
L5:	Sawa.	OK.
L4:	Haya.	OK.
L5:	Ok, nitarudi kupiga typing.	I'll go back to typing.
	[about five turns at talk]	
	[pre-closing 3]	
L5:	Haya. Tutaonana.	Ok. We will meet.
L4:	Ndiyo. Kwaheri.	Yes. Goodbye.
L5:	Kwaheri.	Goodbye.
	[end of conversation]	

The closing in Example (28) is the longest closing recorded with three pre-closings. After *kwaheri* has been exchanged, the learners terminated the conversation.

About her experience in the target language environment, L4 mentioned how she liked the way speakers of Kiswahili greeted each other in the streets, at homes, and even in classrooms. She mentioned how she would stop and greet people on her way to class in Zanzibar. And when she got to class, the instructor would stop and exchange more routine formulae with her. It is very likely that she was exposed to the use of PIs in closings during her eight week stay in the target language environment.

Comparing Learners' Performance

The ability to use all the options available for closing the conversation depends on the proficiency of the learners. Beginning learners have fewer options, intermediate learners have a few more, and advanced learners have the most options. Learners may choose two or three options and use only those. They are able to close the conversation successfully even with limited options. This is mainly because there are no hard and fast rules as to what closing option is to be used and by whom. Beginning and intermediate learners do not usually use the regard option because of the lack of familiarity between each other and between them and their instructors. Advanced learners have the ability to create situations in which they can meet outside of the classroom, and they can also meet the instructors and their family. Therefore, advanced learners have the motivation to use the regard feature while the beginning and intermediate learners do not have it. Table 2 compares the performance of learners in using the closing features.

Table 2. Use of closing features across learners.

Feature	BNNS	INNS	ANNS
Use of Pls	—	—	0
Intention to leave	—	0	0
Regards	—	—	+
Welcome	—	—	+
Continuation			
1) Specific	—	0	0
2) General	+	+	+
Appreciation	+	+	+
Leave-taking	+	+	+

— = no occurrence; + = occurrence; 0 = rare occurrence; BNNS = Beginning non-native speaker; INNS = Intermediate non-native speaker; ANNS Advanced non-native speaker

Target language environment does not seem to be a principle factor in the ability to successfully close a conversation. This is because closing the conversation in Kiswahili is not heavily constrained by cultural norms as opening the conversation is.

While learners often have difficulty opening the conversation, they are generally successful in closing one. Learners may appear rude or unfriendly if they are not able to follow the opening norms in Kiswahili as shown in Table 3. They do not have this problem in closing the conversation.

Table 3. Learners' problems in performing Kiswahili COs.

Status	The norm	Learner's performance	Results
Age difference	form of respect used	form of respect not used	appears rude
Same age	highly involved (compete for PIs)	is not highly involved (do not compete for PIs)	appears unfriendly

The reason for the learners' success in closing the conversation is possibly that 1) there are no compulsory features in closing the conversation in Kiswahili; 2) there is a variety of options to choose from; 3) there is no strict order of occurrence of these options; 4) participants are not explicitly divided into two dissimilar roles as they are in opening the conversation; and 5) participants do not compete for any particular turn.

CONCLUSION

I have shown in this paper that 1) Kiswahili closings are quite elaborate; 2) Closing features are not strictly ordered: some features have a dual function of pre-closing and terminating a conversation; 3) the equivalent of **goodbye** is not the terminal pair in Kiswahili: it may not be used at all; and 4) Kiswahili closings can be understood by making reference to the opening part of the conversation.

I have also demonstrated that learners are generally more successful in closing a conversation than in opening one. The reason behind this success is that learners can repeat what the other participant has said and be able to close the conversation without any problems; learners can choose a few of the available options and use just those and still close the conversation successfully; and there is no strict ordering of closing features nor are there compulsory features.

There are features that are specifically found in Kiswahili closings that learners, especially, lower proficiency learners, do not use. The lack of these features (namely specific continuation, regard, and Phatic Inquiry), however, does not affect the learners' success in closing the conversation.

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NOTES

[1] The researcher, a native speaker of Kiswahili participated as participant W in the native speaker examples and as FT (Female teacher) in the non-native speaker examples. MT is a male teacher who participated in the collection of non-native speaker data.

[2] Schegloff and Sacks (1973) refer to the initiation of a closing section as a 'pre closing' move, or a 'possible pre-closing' move when it is not accepted by the other speaker who may decide to introduce a new topic and therefore move out of the initiated closing. If the pre-closing is accepted then the conversation is led to its termination.

[3] Closing features under discussion are underlined in the native speaker examples.

[4] The word *baba* literally means 'father'. In Example (1), however, it is used as an expression of endearment by L. L is the same age as the parents of D.

[5] The address term *bwana* means 'mister' in official situations. In unofficial situations, it means 'friend'. It is this second meaning that *bwana* refers to in the examples used in this paper.

[6] The closing in Example (4) is made up of two turns only. K pre-closes in the first turn and T accepts the pre-closing and terminates the conversation in the next turn.

[7] Lioba Moshi (pc) brought to my attention the use of *nisalimie* 'greet me' in the opening part of the conversation. An alternative way of saying 'greet me' is *niamkie*.

[8] *Chei chei* is the baby talk for *msalkheri* 'good evening' and *sbalkheri* 'good morning' which are respectful greeting forms used by adults in Zanzibar.

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